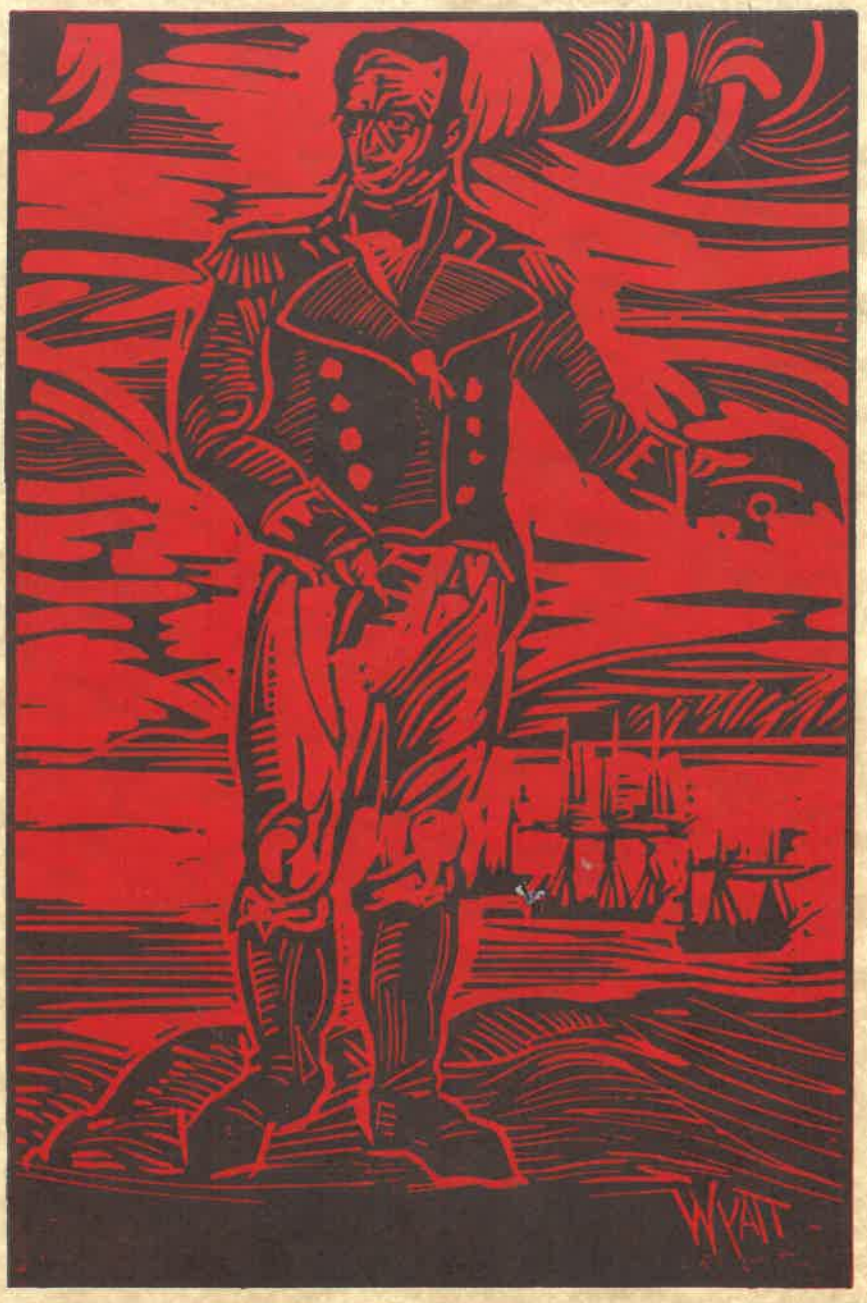
COMMODORE MacDONOUGH



IN
MR. MADISON'S WAR

COMMODORE MacDONOUGH IN MR. MADISON'S WAR OR BROADSIDES ON LAKE CHAMPLAIN

BY
ROGER B. SAMMON

Illustrated by
Stanley Wyatt

BLUE LION PRESS
1986

COMMODORE MACDONOUGH's VICTORY;

O FREEMEN, raiſe a joyous ſtrain!
Aloft the Eagle towers,
"*We've met the enemy*" again—
Again have made them 'OURS!'

Champlain! the cannon's thundering voice,
Proclaims thy waters free;
Thy foreſt-waving hills rejoice,
And echo—*Victory*!

The ſtriped flag upon thy wave,
Triumphantly appears,
And to inveſted landſmen, brave,
A ſtar of promiſe bears.

Now to the world Fame's trumpet ſounds
The deed with new applauſe,
While from a *Conquer'd Fleet* reſounds,
Our ſeamen's loud huzzas.

Britannia, round thy haggard brows
Bind bitter wormwood ſtill;
For lo! again thy ſtandard bows
To valiant Yankee ſkill.

But; O! what chaplet can be found
MACDONOUGH's brows to grace?
'Tis done! the glorious wreath is bound,
Which time can ne'er efface,

And ſtill a juſt—a rich reward,
His country has to give;
He ſhall be firſt in her regard,
And with her PERRY live!

Columbia! though thy cannon's roar
On inland ſeas prevail,
And thee alone—while round each ſhore
Outnumbering ſhips aſſail.

Yet deed with deed, and name with name,
Thy gallant ſons ſhall blend,
Till the bright arch of naval fame,
O'er the broad ocean bend!

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Mention of the War of 1812 evokes images of blazing frigate duels on the Atlantic, Dolly Madison fleeing the White House or Andrew Jackson's stunning defeat of the British at New Orleans. The clever tactics and heroic leadership of MacDonough, however, had a greater effect on the course of history and the status of a secure, respected nationhood. This was a victory greatly celebrated at the time but treated lightly by later historians, and its glory has undeservedly faded into seldom-consulted archives, despite the fact that it was the very embodiment of the young nation's spirit, ingenuity and courage. This proud struggle secured for America a place among respected nations, dispelling the image of a bumbling, disaffected erstwhile colony.

Every reader of America's early history knows that Jackson's victory took place after the signing of the Treaty of Ghent and did not affect its terms. Schoolboys know that Perry annihilated the British fleet on Lake Erie but may not know that Perry had more ships, men, guns and tonnage than the enemy. On the other hand, MacDonough's destruction of the British fleet on September 11, 1814 *did* affect the negotiations at Ghent. It forced the retreat of a Montreal-based invading army composed of hardened veterans from Wellington's Peninsular campaign. MacDonough sank or captured an entire enemy fleet—the only time in American history that a smaller U.S. force defeated a larger enemy fleet!

Consider the statements of renowned commentators:

"...The most decisive engagement of the war."

Winston S. Churchill
"History of the English-Speaking People"

"It will always be a source of surprise that the American public should have so glorified Perry's victory over an inferior force and have paid comparatively little attention to MacDonough's victory which really won against decided odds in ships, men and metal."

Theodore Roosevelt
"The Land War of 1812"

"MacDonough's victory is not surpassed by any naval victory on record...it is, perhaps, one of the most important events in the history of our country."

William Jones
Secretary of the Navy, 1814

"More nearly than any other incident of the War of 1812, the Battle of Lake Chaplain merits the epithet 'decisive'."

Admiral Mahan
"Sea Power in its Relations to The War of 1812"

Who was this man who put the American negotiators in the position of winners in the panelled, ornate bargaining room in Ghent? What man took the bulky swagger from the aristocratic lords of "Perfidious Albion"?

This 29-year-old lieutenant epitomized entrepreneurial, risk-taking willingness as he contended with dissension, despair, disloyalty and conflicting orders in mounting a strategic miracle against the tattooed, hairy veterans of Salamanca, Vittoria and Torre Vedras.

In the summer of 1812, he was ordered to construct, recruit and tactically control the Lake Champlain invasion route and insure the U.S. ascendancy of the water. He rode on horseback four days from Portland, Maine to Burlington, Vermont where he had nothing yet to command. A blooded naval officer of the stormy Atlantic duty and blazing orange broadsides of Tripoli, he took his command alone and in a saddle! Having stormed Barbary pirate strongholds, he was incongruously trotting through the forests of the Granite State.

He grew up in The Trappe, Delaware and had no career thought but the Navy. A strong, red-headed Annapolis graduate, he had to take leave from active duty when there was no assignment and no pay in 1809, skippering a merchant ship around the Horn to oriental ports. A naval officer shouldn't be that far from carronades and the bosun's pipe, but peacetime navy was thin-living in the early 19th century. War brought him back to the smell of cordite.

Arriving at the lake, he took General Bloomfield's two gunboats in the name of the Secretary of the Navy and in so doing provoked a predictably irate Army blast of offended authority.

Lt. Thomas MacDonough seemed well equipped, though, in character and in heritage, to move into an inter-service fray. His great-grandfather had emigrated from County Kildare. His grandfather carved out a farm along the Chesapeake, and his father was a major in the War of Independence. As for Thomas being the sixth of ten children, there was no likelihood of inheriting the homestead. Thus, his successful appointment to Annapolis which led to duty on OLD IRONSIDES, ENTERPRISE, INTREPID, WASP and ESSEX—hallowed names familiar to recent veterans. When, as one of "Prebles Boys," he helped cut out the captured PHILADELPHIA from the Barbary Brigands ("Millions for defense—not one cent for Tribute"), Admiral Horatio Nelson called it "one of the boldest acts of the age."

Now, what was the situation on Lake Chaplain? General Bloomfield, former Governor of New Jersey and a Revolutionary War hero, had 8,000 regular troops and militia with 150 unarmed flatboats (50 men each). There were, however, two gunboats and six derelict sloops. This to patrol a body of water 100 miles long, broad in the middle but only ten miles wide up to Ticonderoga, and only ten miles wide north of Burlington.

MacDonough took over two scows with no guns, six sloops of which five were beached and rotting, one officer, one midshipman and twenty-two fresh water sailors who had never seen salt water or a many-rigged ship.

General Dearborn had ordered a strike into Quebec with 150 flat-boats toward Fort Chambly, but fell back when his militia wouldn't advance into Canada because they only signed up to defend the United States, not invade another country!

Winter arrived with no fleet, no task force and a frozen lake. "Gentlemen don't fight on ice," in the words of Boston's Higginson. War came to a halt in the American north, although Napoleon at this time was losing his army and glory on the retreat from Moscow and the effort to cross the Beresina. For MacDonough, though, it was a time of no action, so the lieutenant went to Connecticut and married a lovely young lady in Hartford.

In the spring of 1813, the U.S. had 7,000 regulars and myriad potential will-o-the-wisp militia blocking the Plattsburgh invasion route. The British, it is known, had 5,000 hard-bitten regulars, 8,000 faint-hearted Canadians and 4,000 undisciplined Indian allies. Naturally, every available regiment under U.S. command was sent to the Lake Erie and Ontario fronts where the struggle for the border was intense.

How to plan the required ascendancy on the lake? First, there were no maps. MacDonough bought his own at Samuel Mills' Bookstore in Burlington! There were no charts of the lake. All depths, gravel bars, channels had to be ascertained by ship patrol taking lead soundings.

Against this was the ongoing unpopularity of the conflict. New Englanders derisively called the struggle "Mr. Madison's War." There was little citizen support, an element usually needed for victory. There was much trade with Canada, and in states along the border, the war was thought totally unnecessary. Governor Jonas Galusha of Vermont discouraged volunteers, would not raise a militia, and broadcast a proclamation that Vermont did not support this Washington charade. Smuggling was rife and family ties were close on both sides of the border.

Frustrated by the ice and concerned with building his ships, MacDonough learned that his old shipmate of CONSTELLATION days, Captain Lawrence in the HORNET had sunk the British frigate H.M.S. PEACOCK in 15 minutes in the wide-ranging Atlantic. Surely, the lieutenant wished he were back on salt water where 500 British merchantmen and three frigates had been taken in seven months, providing great prize money. Prior to that, of course, 6,000 American seamen had been imprisoned by the arrogant British who, in an effort to show they ruled the waves, had blockaded the U.S. coast and captured 1,000 U.S. vessels.

S. Wyatt '60 - '86 90/200

The ambitious construction program resulted in completion of three ships by spring thaw. The two Army sloops (renamed GROWLER and EAGLE) with 11 guns each, joined the commandeered and converted brig, PRESIDENT, carrying 12 guns.

In May 1813, Maine and Vermont volunteers took over the lake shores as General Bloomfield moved west, and word came that Sir James Lucas Yeo was named British Commander of all ships on all lakes. He was generally regarded as a coward in the U.S. because he had made a bold, bragging challenge to Captain Porter and the ESSEX for a one-on-one frigate shoot-out and then never showed up at the rendezvous. A ship duel of dramatic consequences could still be made by naval skippers in this era!

Constant setbacks plagued the early fleet development. A new and unskilled sailing master rammed the flagship, PRESIDENT, on a submerged ledge and ripped a long section out of the hull. They just barely made shore and beached the wounded fighter for extensive repairs below the waterline. The British took this occasion to sortie from Ile-aux-Noix at the source of the Sorel and embark on a marauding expedition down the Chazy/Plattsburgh coast, shelling towns and troop encampments. MacDonough sent his one officer with GROWLER and EAGLE to force the British back but with firm orders not to get drawn impetuously into a pursuit down the Sorel River. He was to turn back at the border and stay on the lake. Unluckily, Smith got carried away, sailed into the trap and, fired on from both shores, surrendered the two ships which the British were quick to add to their growing fleet. Two of his three ships were gone, forty men were captured, and the one remaining ship was hauled up the beach for emergency repairs. A terrible state! The British promptly named the two captured ships H.M.S. BROKE and SHANNON after the Captain and the ship that defeated the brand new U.S. frigate, CHESAPEAKE, at Cape St. Ann off Boston Harbor.

As would be expected, a rapid building and recruiting program got underway at Burlington. Foundries, shipwrights, carpenters, and New York ship chandlers were scheduled forward at a frenzied pace. While MacDonough was helpless, the British landed south of Chazy on the lake with three sloops, two gunboats, 40 flatboats or scows, and 1,000 men to loot and destroy Plattsburgh. They did this unopposed and careened around the lake shooting up farmhouses and villages at will. They even came to Burlington to smoke out MacDonough, but he would have none of it, and with the long ship guns hauled to a promontory, drove the piratical invaders back to look for easier plunder. The British were on a rampage! The *Montreal Herald,* in an issue a week later, wrote, "Our ships will teach those democratic, bloody packhounds the danger of insulting our sacred borders."

There was no great reason for the Lieutenant to stay at a 100-mile-long skating rink. He needed every possible ship armament item and carpentry skill to control the lake when the British would come down on land and water in the spring break-up. He was most persuasive and lavish with Navy i.o.u.'s because he got quick action and material for six new gunboats, four refurbished galleys and four two-masted ships. This scheduling required a heavy construction effort in severe winter weather but indicates the Government's concern about British military concentration along the historic invasion route.

The frigate (constructed in 35 days!) was a true ocean-going ship! Shorter than the CONSTITUTION, but equal to the famous CONSTELLATION in length and longer than BONHOMME RICHARD, WASP or HORNET. It would prove to be as great a battler as those famous prowlers of the ocean. The Liberty ship record of Henry Kaiser in World War II can't even compare with "Raw lumber to afloat and rigged" in five weeks. It was christened the SARATOGA, where Burgoyne surrendered the last time the British came down that attack route!

There were now 329 men whose greed for bonuses covered up lack of seamanship. A request went out for Marines (the few, the proud) but none chose to join this group in the Lake. One can imagine the bustle in acquiring sails, hawsers, anchors, grappling irons, cable, spars, powder, and keeping sailors peaceful in town.

The British had a great scheme to send an armada of flatboats filled with stone to be sunk at the mouth of the Otter River, thus bottling up these U.S. ships while still under construction and before they could get to deep water.

In the current U.S. Navy, the designation D.D. indicates a destroyer. In MacDonough's fleet, these initials were given to galleys (rowed by soldiers) and meant Death Dealers. These fragile oared craft, reminiscent of Grecian ships on the Aegean, carried one large 12-pounder and were christened VIPER, NETTLE, CENTIPEDE and BORER. Supplies poured in along the post road from Albany and Troy. Many have wondered why recently invented steamboats weren't used for transport, but the Navy and MacDonough had no confidence in the unreliable mechanical monsters.

The British got on the water first even though their great frigate CONFIANCE wasn't commissioned. Captain Pring headed south from Canada with one brig, three ships and twelve galleys. Informers reported all this movement and emphasized the fact that the enemy had a million of the new Congreve rockets to bombard U.S. troops along the shore in front of Prevost's vaunted army of veterans. Thus, Pring in the LINNET with BROKE, SHANNON and five galleys hit the Otter estuary, but a well-planned defense and the newly-constructed Fort Cassin

repelled them. The British built their ships with on-board furnaces to fire cherry red shells that started fires after the initial destruction, causing further confusion. The Commodore sent his 50-foot gunboats out as a feint to engage the enemy, and surprisingly Captain Pring raised sail, came about and broke off action!! It appears that he believed the SARATOGA was coming down the Otter to engage his group. Actually MacDonough had the large brig *towed* down hoping the tall masts approaching would frighten Pring. They did!

Obviously, the race was to build bigger and faster in order to dominate the lake. An armada was needed for control of this water. The purported 24-gun CONFIANCE turned out to be a 32-gun British monster. The "Big" or "Many" trade-off on the U.S. side was resolved with more oared gunboats rather than sloops. These were all named after naval heroes—LUDLOW, WILMER, BALL and ALWYN.

What was happening elsewhere? Napoleon had abdicated and was transported ignominiously to Marseilles and Elba, thus releasing the feared British veterans to crush the pesky ex-colonials. They came across the Atlantic proud, confident and counting their bonus coins as though on an excursion.

In July, authority was given to commence another 18-gun brig. A distressing factor, however, was the continued disaffection of Vermonters for the war and the vast amount of supplies they continued to ship across the lake to the British forces. These included spars, rigging, beef, tar, etc. One raft of spars and lumber was intercepted on the lake and taken in tow. The length of the members suggested they were for the big frigate, CONFIANCE, and this interception of smugglers could be the reason for delay in CONFIANCE'S completion.

By mid-summer the officers and crew were judged to be trained as well as any ship on the Atlantic, and General Izard arrived as Army Commander, representing the fifth leader who wanted to take the troops to Montreal with naval support. Once again, MacDonough wisely refused to take his ships down the narrow confines of the Sorel and Richelieu Rivers to the St. Lawrence. No general could persuade him to risk his fleet to support a reckless army adventure.

The NIAGARA was slipped into the water just 19 days after keel laying and joined the fleet on August 29th. The race was advancing inexorably toward the culminating conflict. The CONFIANCE was masted and launched that same week. In a puzzling move, General Izard marched his force to the Niagara Peninsula leaving General Macomb with only 1,500 men to repel 11,000 British troops north of Plattsburgh. All this as word arrived that an English marauding party burned the White House in Washington, marched unimpeded back to their ships and headed up the Chesapeake to bombard Baltimore.

Finally, on August 20, 1813, the U.S. contingent (new and old) was ready to sail. They had new rigging, 300 tons of shot, gunners trained, and even a chaplain, as the ultimate in readiness. As they sailed, MacDonough got word that his first son, only a week old, had died in the Hartford, Connecticut home of his father-in-law.

On September 6th, the PRESIDENT, PREBLE, MONTGOMERY, FRANCIS and WASP with two gunboats headed north, and the British left the lake in fear, sailing back down the Sorel River to safety. Recess was over! The Army wanted the fleet to convoy and transport 4,000 infantry across the border for an attack on Ile-aux-Noix, but MacDonough refused. His fleet was the only protection between Montreal and New York, and he would not be persuaded to leave the lake's strategic waters. The Army invaded anyway but returned in five days in ignominious retreat without having fired a shot. As an indication of interservice rivalry, the Army in Vermont confiscated the barges carrying cast iron cannon balls to the Navy at Burlington.

At this time (September 10, 1813), Perry had his great day on Lake Erie, capturing the British fleet while transferring his flag from the sinking flagship to the NIAGARA. Another distant victory took place at this time. General William Henry Harrison defeated the British under General Brock and their ferocious Indian allies under Tecumseh on the River Thames in Upper Canada and started a march on Montreal. En route they foundered, lost heart, withered in numbers, and retreated to Plattsburgh, numbingly familiar as winter quarters.

The Navy now had 250 men and five ships moored in the Dead River near Varennes consumed by a great fear of the British coming overland to burn and destroy the idle, stripped boats in winter helplessness as the lake congealed into a barren, frigid bleakness.

This was a time for training, ship handling knowledge, and gathering supplies. The accounting records for expenses and equipment was a total shambles. MacDonough in apology said, "Unfortunately, none of us boys went to King's College for mathematics."*

The Army took this hiatus as an occasion to split forces. One brigade went to Plattsburgh with a further split in command—one-half under the infamous General Williamson and the other under General Macomb, a clever and honorable soldier.

Although the construction activity was frenetic, it must be admitted that the winter months were not arduous in the military regimen. There were parties, balls, slow progress on building, sleighing over the lake, and the war seemed quite distant except for spy reports of enemy build-up. These included news of the construction of a 24-gun ship to be commanded by Captain Downie while Captain Everard was in command of BROKE, SHANNON and the gunboats. The British loomed formidable with such a big ship and two experienced, capable English officers.

*Kings College is now Columbia University.

S. Wyatt ao/86

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As the English General Brisbane, with the advance troops, reached Chazy from Canada, General Sir George Prevost followed him south across the border with the full force and occupied the village of Champlain. He commandeered all weapons, horses, and supplies and headed further south on September 3rd. At this point, on the U.S. side, the Vermont militia refused to fight in another state, New York. The few willing volunteers were on the wrong side of the lake! They had to be ferried across in the face of the enemy and in a ship, the PRESIDENT, the Commodore couldn't really afford to release from the fleet.

In Plattsburg, General Mooers dug in behind natural barriers and constructed three primitive forts where the Saranac River enters the lake. He destroyed the two bridges and was determined to blunt the charge of Brisbane's advance troops. Two other respected generals, Jacob Brown and Winfield Scott, joined him for a desperate stand but acknowledged the Army was utterly dependent on naval control of the lake.

Of some small encouragement to the U.S. forces was the fact that General Prevost, despite his enormous ego, decided to wait for the British fleet to defeat MacDonough and thus secure his flank. He constantly admonished the new English fleet commander, Downie, who was senior to Pring and had no knowledge of Champlain's winds or currents. Prevost wanted to get to New York down the Hudson before winter and hurried Downie into precipitous action with biting insults. A pompour general in command and a brave but uninitiated English naval leader gave MacDonough and the Army time to set up a clever defense.

On September 6th, General Mooers fell back giving up Plattsburgh but occupying quite strong positions on the river while MacDonough put his gunboats close ashore wreaking havoc on the advancing redcoats. Records after the action show it was a very effective bombardment with heavy casualties to the advancing British. One wonders why Prevost didn't go inland ten miles, cross the Saranac at a ford and, outnumbering the Americans three to one, encircle them. He seemed committed to the shoreline and the vision of his fleet. The imprudent Downie now arrived in the lake with 92 guns overall, including the now 37-gun CONFIANCE. With the PRESIDENT out of contact (ferrying Vermonters), the U.S. had 86 guns including the 26-gun SARATOGA. While the British had superiority, the difference is still greater. The CONFIANCE was like a heavyweight boxer approaching numerous lightweights. A single ship of that size could overwhelm numerous smaller craft.

The strategic positioning which MacDonough employed made the difference. Downie couldn't dare to go past him on the lake nor could he ignore General Prevost's requirements that he support the troops on

shore. The Commodore cleverly took his four ships and ten galleys into Plattsburgh Bay closing the curve between Cumberland Head and Crab Island. He gave up sailing maneuverability and forced the British to round the Head, lose wind and come to him on a parallel broadside match.

If the reader will be patient, it should be explained that the Commodore used spring lines to anchors. This allows a line from the stern to be wove around the ship through the forward hawsehole and fastened to the bow anchor. Thus, to present the undamaged, new side to the enemy, the bow line is cut, the stern line is hauled out and the ship swings 180 degrees to face the enemy with undamaged opposite side guns—a maneuver without sails or wind. MacDonough also put out Kedge anchors which were rowed out in longboats and dropped 40 yards off the ship's beam. At any time, men could take a strain on the lines to the kedge and angle the guns more directly as the ship moved through an arc. He couldn't be under sail, but in forcing the enemy to come to him, he *still* could adjust to the flow of battle and the calculated angle of broadside blows.

MacDonough had spent two years since arriving lonely on horseback with grandiose orders to "maintain the ascendancy on the Lake." On Sunday, September 11, 1814, the British were sighted at 8:00 a.m. arriving in stately dignity, but it was 9:00 a.m. before they rounded Cumberland Head and closed for action. With his thoughts on 6,000 forlorn American sailors taken improperly by England, MacDonough emulated Nelson at Trafalgar with the signal to his strung-out ships "Impressed seamen call on every man to do his duty."

H.M.S. CONFIANCE, with an inexorably confident manner, sailed at the head of the five British ships and 12 gunboats. Ignoring the unauthorized early fire from EAGLE and taking the ineffective blows with considerable restraint, it dropped the hook one-quarter mile from SARATOGA for a specific range and a massive broadside advantage. MacDonough wanted to fire the first shot on his main 24-pounder (despite EAGLE'S premature effort) and had the pleasure of seeing a direct hit go through the quarterdeck of CONFIANCE, tearing away the helm and taffrail before the British could complete anchoring and train their guns.

The first British retaliatory broadside, however, was absolutely devastating. It almost lifted the SARATOGA out of the water leaving 40 dead and wounded and the deck a shambles. This was the heavy, glowing-red shot the CONFIANCE was designed to deliver. The two flagships blasted each other in destructive pounding, ignoring the lesser firing of their entourage. In this early action, the British ship CHUBB was blown to a hulk, surrendered and drifted between the lines to be taken in tow by PREBLE—one down!

A most clever defensive deployment. The British fleet could not sail to the south and still assist the invading army near Plattsburgh. The anchored position prevented single ship contests in maneuverability.

As an aside, it should be mentioned that Prevost's attack on shore against Macomb was synchronized with the fleet action in view and was equally pounding in its thrust. He knew he had the bigger fleet and overwhelming superiority on land.

For over an hour the battle raged with chain shot disintegrating rigging and spars, shrieking, dying men obliterated in the withering exchange, and hulls punctured by shot skipping off the lake's surface. It was later determined that Downie was killed very early in the battle. He was standing behind a gun when a direct hit uprooted the bronze killer, jamming it back to crush him. The leader was technically killed by his own gun! The gun is now mounted in front of MacDonough Hall at the Naval Academy in Annapolis. Meanwhile, the British galleys closed dauntingly, maneuvered to harrass and board the small U.S. ships. Incessant fire at musket range was maintained amidst a tornado of splinters. At one point, PREBLE (rejoining the line) fought off H.M.S. FINCH and four galleys encircling it like a snarling wolf pack.

MacDonough was cut by flying chunks of splinters and saw the fireballs set his four ships ablaze, although these fires were effectively quenched. The man next to the Commodore was decapitated and his head flew into MacDonough's chest with such force that it knocked him down, while reflexively clutching the severed skull. The scuppers truly ran red and the noise was stunning as the ships pounded broadside after broadside into each other. There was plenty of courage shown on both sides as men worked guns in a hail of fire.

Such intensity couldn't continue and the broadsides gradually lessened. Guns on each side were knocked out, quite apart from carnage above decks. SARATOGA had only two effective guns on its starboard-facing side, but the British made the error of not adjusting their quoins on wedges for repercussive impact, and they were unintentionally aiming higher, off the deck and into the upper works of the SARATOGA and TICONDEROGA. A blessing! MacDonough had already brought his men down out of the rigging where they had originally been placed to snipe at gunboats.

One of those blasts tore a boom loose which fell directly on MacDonough, knocking him out, pinning him and cracking his shoulder. A cry of dismay went up as the battered, blackened men thought their leader was dead. He was revived, however, and immediately ordered the spring cables to be hauled to present the relatively undamaged port side to the enemy, swinging the battered starboard side out of action.

This was a slow and highly vulnerable swing, because, while turning, the SARATOGA could bring no guns to bear on the enemy. The British took the occasion to go through the same reverse and there was a lull, except for LINNET, FINCH, TICONDEROGA and EAGLE filling the air with smoke and shot as the two giants turned ponderously.

Two years of training decided the issue! SARATOGA gradually came around while CONFIANCE got stalled halfway caught on the fulcrum of a poorly placed kedge anchor. The Commodore's guns slowly came on target with very few of the crew left to man them, but the lightly damaged port side bore around on the British. H.M.S. CONFIANCE had her stern (no guns) facing the Americans as she hung halfway through the maneuver. While caulking, repairing, switching gun crews and carrying out 16 amputations below deck, SARATOGA watched the helpless British frigate come into their sights.

After two hours, the battle reached its climax as heavy American shot pounded CONFIANCE, now dismasted, with horrible suffering, and sinking by the stern. They struck their colors and surrendered after a gallant effort.

H.M.S. FINCH had gone aground on Crab Island where MacDonough had left no sailing room by his positioning. H.M.S. LINNET, left alone, fired a punitive killing broadside and quickly lowered the red ensign in surrender before the blast could be answered.

All 16 British ships were sunk or captured. Now only American flags flew on Lake Champlain.

On the U.S. side, 104 were killed and 116 wounded, few of whom would survive. For the British invader of greater strength, 169 were killed and a similarly mutilated 220 waited the slow death of infection and pain—all this carnage in only two hours! This was the last naval battle between English-speaking peoples.

General Sir George Prevost, with no lake protection, broke off action and stealthily crept back to Montreal. His tough Wellington veterans threatened mutiny at not being allowed to advance on a few colonials to get to the rich heartland south of Albany. In a disgruntled, sullen mood, they went back to England without having accomplished anything in crossing the Atlantic twice. Many of them met death on the muddy fields of Waterloo in June of the next year. The satin-breeched, bewigged English negotiators in Belgium revised their treaty conditions. Even Vermont decided to be loyal and share the glory.

On land, General Macomb, seeing the almost total destruction on the water, cleverly, but unnecessarily, had 30 flatboats assembled south of Saranac River. He figured that if the British won they would be so massively damaged he would have his men row out and capture them!

History has forgotten MacDonough, but a grateful nation of the day heaped honors on him. Congress ordered a gold medal struck in his likeness and promoted him to Captain. Vermont gave him 100 acres of land, and New York, always regarding the malcontents of Vermont as pikers, gave him 1,000 acres in Cayuga County.

His portrait still hangs in New York City Hall, a place saved by his intelligent insight, and his home state, Delaware, presented him with an ornate sabre and silver service.

He had a number of prestigious assignments after 1814 but suffered failing health at the same time. He was commander of the Portsmouth Navy Yard which he loved, and he took over the 74-gun battleship OHIO with no wartime circumstances. In 1824, he commanded the CONSTITUTION and the Mediterranean fleet. His beloved wife had died leaving him five children, so he took the youngest son, Caesar Rodney MacDonough with him on the Adriatic cruise. The boy was named after the Delaware hero who was the first signer of the Declaration of Independence.

Terminally ill with pneumonia and now a skeletal, emaciated invalid, he was transferred to a merchant ship for home but died and was buried in mid-Atlantic—a fitting location amidst the white foam and impassive green swells that had seen action and conflict but always returned to serenity and the rhythmic mood of the deep.

A monument in Middletown, Connecticut is inscriptured, "He was distinguished in the world as the Hero of Lake Champlain."

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Columbian Centinel.

No. 3,179.] BOSTON. (Massachusetts), SATURDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 21, 1814. Four Dollars per annum.—Two cents single.

☞ IN THIS PAPER THE LAWS, RESOLUTIONS, &c. OF THE STATE, ARE PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY.

NOTICES.

NOTICE.

THE Subscribers Commissioners appointed by the Hon. *James Prescott*, Esq. Judge of Probate in the county of Middlesex, to receive and examine the claims of the several creditors to the Estate of ALEXANDER HIGGINS late of Charlestown, in said county, Esquire, deceased, intestate, represented insolvent, hereby give notice, that the term of six months from the thirtieth day of August last, is allowed to said creditors to bring in and prove their claims, and that we shall attend that service, at the house of *Benjamin Hurd*, in said Charlestown, on the last Monday of this and the five following months, from seven to nine o'clock in the evening, for the above purpose.

BENJAMIN HURD, } Commissioners.
THOMAS KETTELL, }

Charlestown, 30th Sept. 1814.

NOTICE.

THE subscribers having been appointed to receive and examine the claims of the creditors to the Estate of MARTHA STONE, late of Concord, in the county of Middlesex, widow, deceased, represented insolvent; hereby give notice that six months are allowed to creditors to bring in and prove their claims; and that we shall attend that service, at the house of Maj. *Caleb Stimpson*, in Concord, on the last TUESDAY, of the six following months, at 4 o'clock, P. M. on each of said days.

ABEL. HEYWOOD, } Commissioners.
JOHN REVES. }

Concord, Aug. 20th, 1814.

NOTICE.

ON the 4th inst. was taken from the Barn of the Subscriber, at Lechmere's Point in Cambridge, a Sorrel MARE about 15 years old, has a small white spot on her forehead and a bunch on her neck near her head on the left side. Whoever will return the Mare and secure the Thief, so that he may be brought to justice shall receive a reward of twenty dollars—or ten dollars for the Mare only—to the Subscriber, WALTER RUSSELL. sept 11

NOTICE.

THE Meeting of the *Massachusetts Society for promoting Christian Knowledge*, which was to have been held in Boston, on the 15th inst. is indefinitely postponed for reasons not anticipated at the time it was appointed. By order of the Directors.

WM. HILLIARD, *Clerk.*

Boston, September 10th, 1814.

NOTICE.

A BIENNIAL Convention of the *Protestant Episcopal Church*, in the Eastern Diocese, will be holden at Portsmouth, N. H. on WEDNESDAY, the 28th instant.

ASA EATON, *Secretary.*

sept 17

NOTICE.

DR. FARNSWORTH, has removed to No. 22, Union-street, near Hanover-street. 3m july 9

NOTICE is hereby given, to the Proprietors of the Boston Athenæum, that their annual meeting, for the choice of officers, will be held (by adjournment) at their house in Tremont-street, THIS DAY, September 17th at 11 o'clock, A. M.

sept 16 WILLIAM S. SHAW, *Secy.*

Evangelical Missionary Society.

THE Members of the "*Evangelical Missionary Society*," are hereby informed, that their annual meeting, will be holden at Waltham, on WEDNESDAY, the fifth of October next, at 10½ o'clock, A. M. at the house of Col. *David Townsend*. The Religious Exercises usual on the occasion, will commence at two o'clock, P. M. The discourse will be delivered by Mr. Mr. THAYER, of Lancaster—after which there will be a collection to aid the objects of the Society. *Per Order.*

S. RIPLEY,
JOHN SANDERSON, } *Committee.*
JOHA. COOLIDGE. }

☞ The Trustees of the Society are requested to meet at the aforenamed place the day preceding, at 2 o'clock, P. M.

sept 10

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

NORFOLK, ss. At a Court of Probate, held at Dedham, in and for the county of Norfolk, on the first Tuesday of September, A. D. 1814.

A CERTAIN Instrument purporting to be the last will and testament of JOANNA EVERETT, late of Foxborough, in said county, widow, deceased, being presented to this Court for Probate, by Aaron Everett, the Executor therein named—the said Aaron is hereby Ordered, to notify all persons interested in the Estate of the said deceased, to appear at a Court of Probate, to be holden at Wrentham, in said county, on the second Tuesday of October next, by causing this order to be published in the *Dedham Gazette*, printed at Dedham, and *Columbian Centinel*, printed at Boston, three successively, previously to the said Court, that they may shew cause either in favor of, or against the Probate of the said Instrument.

EDWARD H. ROBBINS, *J. of Pro.*

sept 10

John Wilson,

DEEPLY impressed with a sense of gratitude for the very liberal patronage he has received from the Citizens of Boston and vicinity, while he has been a resident in this Country, takes this opportunity publicly to acknowledge it—and respectfully solicits a continuance of that favor which will ever claim his most assiduous endeavors to please. Also, wishes to inform his friends and customers, that on account of his unpleasant situation as an Alien, dependent on legal authority for permission to remain in town from one month to another, and liable at the expiration of every month to be denied that liberty—it becomes necessary for him in future to sell for cash only, which he hopes will meet their approbation. The advantage derived from the method of closing business, must be obvious to all, which will very materially alter the price of Clothing, and more than balance the usual credit of Tailors Bills.

He intends as usual, to keep an extensive assortment of superfine CLOTHS, CASSIMERES, and every article in his line, as can be found in Boston.

It is likewise necessary to have all unsettled accounts adjusted, and those who have bills standing, are particularly required to call and pay them—and if there are any who have demands, to present them for payment. 3m sept 3

FOR Sale—an Excellent FARM,

situated in Sherborne, with 2 miles of the *Mendon-Branch Turnpike*, about 90 acres of excellent Land, well proportioned with Mowing, Tillage, Pasturing and Wood land, with a large Dwelling-House two stories high, in good repair, a large Barn, Chaise-House, &c. a large valuable Blacksmith's Shop and trip Hammer, with a valuable water privilege. Said Farm is well fenced, principally with stone wall, and is excellently watered by Charles River, and a never failing brook which passes through the same. The Estate will be offered for sale, is considered to be one of the most valuable and productive estates in the town of Sherborne. For further particulars, apply to Capt. *Samuel Seager*, Boston, or to the subscriber. CALVIN BARGER.

Sherborn, September 8th, 1814.

EVENTS OF THE WAR.

On Lake Champlain Border.

BURLINGTON, (Ver.) Aug. 16.

THERE have been several accounts circulated of the strength and losses of the British and American squadrons in the late glorious and hard-fought action, which vary in many particulars, and which as they were all incorrect by the official accounts on both sides, which may be daily expected, it is unnecessary to repeat. Exclusive of the gunboats and barges, which did not take a very active part in the contest, the British guns are stated at 77—the American at 70. The men at 300 on board the British, and on board the American at 470. The loss on board the British vessels is estimated at 84 killed, and 110 wounded. On board the American at 49 killed and 67 wounded.

Com. DOWNIE and three Lieuts of the British, were killed—Lieuts. GAMBLE and BYASSAURY, and Sailing Master CARTER, of the American.

Capt. PRING, and 6 or 8 Lieutenants, are made prisoners; the wounded have been paroled and sent to the lake ave Noirs.

The British flag ship mounted 28 long twenty-four pounders, besides having two gun decks as her lower and heavy; a battery which her frigates of the British navy can boast. This account and remark is not from a British officer, who was taken.

On Wednesday the 13th inst. the interment of the American and British officers, who fell in the late memorable battle, took place, in a manner to do honor to the bravery with which they defended their respective flags. The coffins of the American officers, covered with the flags of their vessels, were taken on board a boat from the Commodore's ship, and followed by him and his officers, in another boat, to the British ship, where they took on board the deceased British officers, covered with the flags of their own vessels, and followed by their surviving officers, and proceeded to the shore. During the procession, minute guns were fired from the Commodore's ship.

At the place they were received by a large escort of infantry and artillery, and joined by a large number of the officers of the army, and while they proceeded to the public burying ground, minute guns were soon fired from the fort. At the graves there was a large discharge of musketry and artillery. The procession was thronged by a numerous concourse of citizens. Although the afternoon was very rainy, yet the ceremony was conducted in such a manner, as to show to our enemy, that we have not been subjected to the respect shown to a LAWRENCE and others.

On the evening of the night in which the British commenced their retreat, a British Major sent for a new at Gen. Mooers's to remanned to protect his trainer's house, in the neighborhood of the British camp, and assured him, that the enemy had received intelligence, by mail on that day at noon, by way of Halifax, that preparations of power, had been made in England and America, were against Kenger. Whether this account was forged for the purpose of exciting their retreat, or to dash the war spirit of our militia, or whether confidence is to be placed as it, the public must judge.

H. Q. Plattsburg, Sept. 14, 1814.

GENERAL ORDERS.

THE Governor General of the Canadas and Commander in Chief of the British Forces in North America, having arrived at the frontiers of his States, with the avowed purpose of conquering the country as far as Crown Point and Ticonderoga, there to winter and harass with a view to further conquest, brought with him a powerful army, and Sir George's army ascending to fourteen thousand men, completely equipped and accompanied by a numerous train of artillery and all the engines of war—some of his band conquered in France, Spain, Portugal, the Indies, and in various other parts of the globe, and led by the most approved and experienced generals of the British army. A flotilla also, superior to ours in vessels, men and guns, had determined at once to crush us both by land and by water.

The Governor-General after boasting of what he would do, and endeavoring to diminish the loyal attachments of the United States, from their ark-grance of British principles and manners as set forth in his proclamations and orders, found his head-quarters at the village of Champlain to organize his army and to settle the government of the subdued conquests. On the second day of the month, he marched from Champlain, and on the 11th appeared before the village of Plattsburg, with his whole army, and his powerful flotilla. On the general attack, the flotilla arrived.

The enemy's flotilla in sight in the morning passed Cumberland Head, and at noon engaged our flotilla at anchor in the bay off this town, fully considered it crushing in an instant the whole of our naval force, but the gallant Com. MACDONOUGH in the short space of two hours, obliged the large vessels to strike their colors, whilst the gallies owned themselves by flight. This glorious achievement was in full view of the several forts, and the American troops on the main